

TOBACCO FREE NEWS

NOTES FROM THE CO-CHAIRS

KAY ASHTON



ATCA is dedicated to advocacy towards promoting a healthy Alaska through reduction of the effects of tobacco. The most effective way to achieve this goal is to change what we expect of ourselves and others, and the most effective way to change these social norms is advocacy.

Advocacy is not complex; it is what we do every day. Whether we are working for better schools, getting the kids to take out the garbage or changing laws, it is comprised of simple steps taken in a united direction toward a common aim. The ATCA communications workgroup has done a wonderful job in pulling together information for all of us to draw upon as we engage in advocacy in the arena of tobacco prevention. We are fortunate to have advocacy expertise to call upon: ATFK, ANR, ATCA, core agencies and the expert organizers who are out in the field laying the ground work for significant change. Regardless of the title, be it grantee, ATCA member, activist or private citizen—we all have the ability to initiate and create positive change in our communities.

We are very excited about the changes that have taken place and the ones that are in the works.

"There are two mistakes one can make along the road to truth - not going all the way and not starting."

Kay & Moses



Tobacco Summit — Kenai, AK
April 21–23, 2010

Alaska's Tobacco
QUIT LINE
888-842-7848

November 2009

MOSES TULIM



Steering committee 2009

Contact information available on the web at:

www.alaskatca.org

Kay Ashton, Co Chair

Core Agency: American Lung Assoc.

Moses Tulum, Co-Chair

Native representative

Lincoln Bean Sr.

ANHB representative

Bill Bouwens

At-Large

Melanie Brenner

At Large

Gary Ferguson, ND

Native representative

Alex Hicks

Core Agency: State representative

Christine Grangaard

Interior representative

Aubie Gregg

Northern representative

Pat Luby

Core Agency: AARP

Laura Muller

Native representative

Emily Nenon

Core Agency: ACS CAN

Jenny Olendorf

Southcentral representative

Pat Reynaga

Anchorage representative

Andrea Thomas

Southeast representative

Marilynn Thorson

Southwest representative

ASK Dr. Gary



We're starting a new column devoted to answering questions on wellness in your community! "Ask Dr. Gary" will be a regular column in our ATCA newsletter that addresses questions around community wellness.

Dr. Gary Ferguson serves the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium as their Director of Wellness and Prevention and also practices Naturopathic Medicine at Avante Medical Center in Anchorage, Alaska.

He is an ATCA Steering Committee Member representing the Alaska Native Health Board.

Send your questions to Dr. Gary c/o atca@aalaska.com. We will not identify the individual submitting the question. The next publication deadline is early January, 2010.

Haines Clean Indoor Air

By Nancy McGrew & Andrea Thomas

After years of dedicated work in educating Haines by Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium and the members of Haines Partnership for Healthy Living, the citizens passed a comprehensive clean indoor air ordinance that covers all work places, including bars and restaurants.

The ordinance passed 561 votes (55.33%) to 453 (44.67%) - Haines is renowned for having a close votes! It has been a long stressful road with many twists and turns, but we are thankful that Haines joined the Southeast cities of Sitka, Juneau and Klawock in protecting their citizens from the dangers of secondhand smoke. The members of the Haines Partnership for Healthy Living stepped up to the plate time and time again to pass this ordinance.

The Haines Partnership for Healthy Living, HPHL, Coalition members were community citizens who took a personal and passionate interest in getting such legislation passed. The group consisted of about 6-7 active members. The HPHL active members led by the SEARHC Tobacco Health Educator were the driving force for the policy change. The group held weekly hour long lunch time meetings at the library organizing their activities.

The coalition was not well funded as they decided to make personal contributions rather than take on any fund raising events. Their money was spent during the last 2 weeks of the campaign to run newspaper advertisements requesting their fellow citizens to vote YES on proposition 1 on Tuesday October 6. The Coalition also received good free of charge media coverage by getting scheduled on a local public radio program and several letters of support to the editor of the local newspaper.

The effort was fortified, though a donation, by sending out postcards to register voters with a picture of the community on a clear air day restating the dangers of second hand smoke with a request to vote yes.

Many SEARHC employees both past and present helped build the foundation for the passage of this ordinance including: Wilbur Brown, Jane Weagant, Glade Morales, Nancy McGrew and Michael Jenkins. We could not have helped move Haines forward without the support of all the State Tobacco Program staff, CDC Tribal Support Center staff, all the awesome AKEELA support staff and the big four American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, American Lung Association in Alaska, American Heart Association and AARP. We want to specially thank Emily Nenon, Eric Myers, and Suzanne Sands for their many hours of dedicated effort in Haines. All the other state grantees have been an inspiration and support to the SEARHC staff, especially Wendy Hamilton at NCADD.

Upcoming ATCA Activities
Elections, Tobacco Summit



Protect everyone's right to breathe smokefree air! Vote YES on Prop 1 on Oct. 6th




Haines Partnership for Healthy Living




Update on State Tobacco Tax Activity: Taxes on Smokeless Tobacco

By: Carrie Nyssen,
American Lung Association AIW
Emily Nenon,
American Cancer Society
Cancer Action Network

Raising taxes on cigarettes and other tobacco products produces enormous benefits by reducing overall tobacco use. Tax increases are especially effective at reducing youth tobacco use rates. Adolescents and young adults are two to three times more sensitive to tobacco price changes than adults.

In Alaska, the state and many localities tax cigarettes on a per-pack basis. The state tax is two dollars per pack. Other tobacco products, like spit or chew tobacco (sometimes called moist snuff) as well as cigars are taxed as a percentage of their wholesale price, (referred to as an *ad valorem* tax which is Latin for “according to value.”) Current state tax on these products is 75% of wholesale price.

Public health organizations know that it is important to raise and keep prices high on all tobacco products, both cigarettes and other tobacco products, in order to keep kids from ever starting to use any form of tobacco.

We have much more work to do in Alaska to make sure everyone knows that spit or moist snuff tobacco and other smokeless tobacco products are NOT safe as an alternative to cigarette

smoking. Health consequences include oral cancer, gum disease, nicotine addiction and increased risk of cardiovascular disease.

Many new smokeless tobacco products come in a number of appealing flavors and can potentially serve as an especially attractive gateway to a lifetime of smoking or other tobacco addiction. Several varieties look, smell and taste like candy and are easily concealable.



The appeal of smokeless tobacco and misunderstandings about how dangerous it is combine with the already high use rates in Alaska to make it especially concerning. Discussions about the level of taxation on smokeless tobacco products have been happening on the statewide level for a number of years.

Most recently, during Alaska’s 2009 legislative session, House Bill 188 was introduced to change the taxation on moist snuff from *ad valorem* to a

weight-based system. According to the Sponsor Statement, the bill’s sponsor, Representative Bob Herron of Bethel, introduced the legislation with intent to provide a disincentive for Alaskans to start using moist snuff products and increase the tax revenue for the State of Alaska.

Dividing up how different tobacco products are taxed can be a very complex exercise. There are potential warnings to be heeded with weight-based taxes in particular. According to the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, switching to a weight based system can sharply cut the taxes per can or per dose of premium moist snuff smokeless tobacco products – the brands that are most attractive to youth – thereby increasing the number of youth who will potentially become addicted users.

Protecting our youth from tobacco products should remain a priority for Alaska. Working to educate ourselves and legislators about the mechanisms and consequences of tobacco taxes is an effective way to continue our mission. For additional information and updates regarding HB 188, please contact alaskatca@gmail.com.

VOTE!
For your Steering
Committee Member.
Ballots will be available soon!
For more information please visit www.alaskatca.org.

Questions Concerning
**Smoke Free
Housing????**
Call:1-888-474-4635
**Smokefree Housing
Partnership**
Alaska Tobacco
Control Alliance

**JUNEAU CLEAN AIR
October 2009**

By: Wendy Hamilton,
NCADD—Juneau

On October 6th, 2009, Juneau voters passed a ballot initiative that will increase Juneau’s local tobacco from .30 cents to \$1.00 a pack, and from 12% OTP (other tobacco products) to 45% OTP. A whopping 62% of the voters said, “YES” to making Juneau a healthier community and “YES” to supporting youth tobacco prevention efforts by increasing the price of tobacco. The tax will be administered at the wholesale level and will go into effect Jan.1, 2010. According to projections by the City and Borough of Juneau Finance Department, the increased tax revenues will bring \$1.2 million additional dollars to the City.

While crafting the language of the proposed ordinance, City



Some of the Juneau Clean Air members celebrate their victory!

Assembly members were very careful in stating the “intended use” of the increased revenue. Included in the intention language is “to spend the proceeds of this tax on health and social service needs related to substance abuse and tobacco use, prevention and cessation.”

The Juneau Affiliate of the National Council on Alcoholism

and Drug Dependence, (a State Tobacco Prevention and Control Community Grantee), the Juneau Clean Air Coalition, and the Teens Against Tobacco Use (TATU) combined efforts to educate the community about the importance of increasing the price of tobacco to prevent youth initiation and promote cessation. They logged many volunteer hours distributing door hangers, manning the phone banks, hanging posters, and doing radio interviews and other earned media. Members of Juneau Clean Air and other tobacco prevention advocates in the state donated financially to support a small TV, radio and newspaper campaign. The American Cancer Society and AARP sent out email alerts to their Juneau members.

Stamp

**Alaska Tobacco
Control Alliance (ATCA)**

creates a statewide network of health advocates to develop, support and sustain comprehensive tobacco control programs.

JOIN TODAY

It's free and fun

www.alaskatca.org

Email: atca@aalaska.com

Telephone: 907-450-2453

Fax: 907-450-2470

c/o Information Insights
212 Front Street, Ste. 100
Fairbanks, AK 99701